

March 23, 2020

For Immediate Release

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Events and Gatherings Limited to 10 People or Less

Public events and gatherings are limited to 10 people or fewer statewide, following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts, which is to be effective at least through the end of March and may be extended. A copy of this guidance can be found on Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department's website at www.swhealth.ne.gov.

This guidance currently includes concerts, festivals, conferences, worship service/church, weddings, funerals, gyms, theaters, sports and other such events.

This currently does not include grocery stores, pharmacies, or worksites.

Governor Ricketts has said worksites could stay open, and the 10-person limit does not apply to grocery stores, though it is recommended that these stores arrange checkouts so that customers are spread apart. Social distancing, staying 6 feet away from others, is critical during this time while we all work to "flatten the curve" of the rising number of cases.

Students and families are asked to please not gather at alternate locations, in order to help keep our communities safe and protect our most vulnerable populations.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) recommends that you call their office at 308-345-4223 if you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or have recently traveled to an area with ongoing spread. For general information about COVID-19, please call the state hotline which is available daily from 8 am to 8 pm at 402-552-6645.

"Southwest Nebraskans will get through this pandemic outbreak together. We are family. If you see a business not in compliance with the 10-person limit, share your concerns with them in a non-confrontational manner," states Myra Stoney, Health Director at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. "We know that most people will want to work together to keep our communities healthy and safe."

Residents are encouraged to review their family preparedness plans. Just as you prepare for severe weather or natural disasters, you can prepare for pandemic diseases. CDC.gov has some excellent

resources which you can review with your family such as a checklist to get your household ready for a COVID-19 outbreak in your community. Here are some of their recommendations to prepare your family:

- Know where to find local information on COVID-19 and local trends of COVID-19 cases.
- Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you get the symptoms.
- Know what additional measures those at higher risk and who are vulnerable should take.
- Implement steps to prevent illness (e.g., stay home when sick, handwashing, respiratory etiquette, clean frequently touched surfaces daily).
- Create a household plan of action in case of illness in the household or disruption of daily activities due to COVID-19 in the community.
- Know about emergency operations plans for schools/workplaces of household members.

This and other resources are also located on SWNPHD's website, along with regularly updated information on any cases in the health district.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department will keep you posted in this quickly changing environment. We continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic to anticipate its impact on southwest Nebraska. We are working with local public health partners on this evolving situation and continue to communicate important updates to the public and our partners.

For more information, contact SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby's) in McCook or at 501 Broadway in Imperial (5th St. entrance). Information can also be found on the website www.swhealth.ne.gov and on Facebook and Twitter.

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